

REMARKS

Applicants have now had an opportunity to carefully consider the Examiner's comments set forth in the Office Action of October 25, 2005.

Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Claims 1-15 are pending.

The Office Action

Claims 1, 5, 6, and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by Jackson, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,634,636).

Claims 2, 8-10, and 14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over Jorg (U.S. Patent No. 5,810,346) in view of Graushar (U.S. Patent No. 5,100,116).

Claims 4, 11-13, and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over Jorg in view of Graushar and further in view of Jackson, et al.

Claims 1, 3, and 5-7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over Jorg in view of Jackson, et al.

For the reasons outlined below it is submitted that the claims are in condition for allowance.

Claim 1, as amended, recites an interface which includes a sheet transporting system. The sheet transporting system includes independently operable sheet transports and provides selectable sheet translation in a plane to selectably transport sheets from selected ones of said plural sheet input areas to selected plural sheet outputs areas so as to provide selectable sheet feeding from selected sheet input areas to selected sheet output areas. The sheet transports provide variable angle driving for selectable sheet rotation and translation of selected sheets in the plane.

The Examiner argues that Jackson provides plural sheet input areas from the left and right side of the conveyor 20. However, the conveyor system disclosed by Jackson includes an upper section and a lower section which are substantially coextensive (col. 3, lines 25-26. In FIGURE 1, the upper section is illustrated cut away to make the contents of the lower section visible. This would not suggest to one of skill in the art that the upper section could be removed to allow sheets to be input from the left or right side of the conveyor. Rather, one skilled in the art would immediately realize that the conveyor of

Jackson has but one sheet input area, at the upstream end, and one sheet output area, at the downstream end. Jackson seeks to maintain movement of the sheet in the downstream direction, thus correcting for any minor rotation or orientation of the sheet.

The Examiner further argues that claim 1 is unpatentable over Jorg in view of Jackson. Jorg discloses a paper handling system which includes modules 102, 200 which allow pieces of paper to be transported in a transport direction and in a direction transverse to the transport direction. There is no suggestion of selectively rotating the pieces of paper in Jorg's system. The Examiner points to element 134 of Jorg. However, this element is a turnover device. It does not permit rotation of the piece of paper via variable angle driving. Nor does Jorg provide any motivation for rotation of sheets. Jorg's gathering path is nowhere more than one module wide. Thus, there is no motivation to provide sheet movement in other than the two orthogonal directions shown.

Accordingly, it is submitted that claim 1 and claims 3 and 5-7 dependent therefrom distinguish over the reference of record.

Claim 8 recites a system which includes a plurality of printers and a plurality of sheet input areas which receive printed sheets from the plurality of printers, each of the printers feeding printed sheets to a respective one of the sheet input areas. A sheet transporting system provides selectable sheet translation to selectably transport sheets from selected ones of the plural sheet input areas to selected ones of said plural sheet outputs areas so as to provide selectable sheet feeding from selected printers to selected sheet processing systems.

Jorg does not disclose or fairly suggest a multifunction printed sheets interface system in which a plurality of printers feed printed sheets to a plurality of sheet input areas which receive printed sheets from the plurality of printers. In Jorg, the cutters are provided with rolls of paper. There is no suggestion of printers feeding sheets to input areas.

Graushar discloses a collating and binding system in which preprinted blanks 16 ("signatures") are fed by a feeder 14 onto a conveyor 18. The signatures travel through one or more printing stations 22 where customized printing is performed. There is no suggestion in Graushar that the printing stations 22 feed printed sheets to a plurality of sheet input areas which receive printed sheets from the plurality of printers. Rather, the printing stations 22 are all together, in the same conveyor line. The printers do not feed

printed sheets to the conveyor but merely print the sheets traveling on the conveyor.

Further, there is no suggestion in Graushar that a plurality of printers feed printed sheets to a respective one of a plurality of sheet input areas of Graushar's conveyor system. The Examiner points to col. 4, lines 45-56 as disclosing "printing sheets on a plurality of printers." However, this section refers to only a single printer 32. Further, there is no suggestion in Graushar as to how two or more such printers could each feed sheets to a respective sheet input area.

Accordingly, it is submitted that claim 8 and dependent claims 2 - 4 and 9 - 13 distinguish over the reference of record.

Claim 14 recites a method including printing sheets on a plurality of printers, feeding the printed sheets from the plurality of printers to a plurality of respective input areas of a printed sheets interface system, transporting the printed sheets from the input areas to selected ones of a plurality of output areas of the printed sheets interface system with a plurality of sheet transports, and sensing a position of the printed sheets during transporting.

Jorg does not disclose such a method. In Jorg, sheets are transported from cutters 114. There is no suggestion or motivation in Jorg for conveying sheets from selected ones of a plurality of printers to selected ones of a plurality of output areas. There is no motivation for combining Graushar with Jorg. Graushar teaches a system in which every sheet travels past the printer. There is no suggestion of feeding printed sheets from plural printers to a plurality of respective input areas.

Accordingly, it is submitted that claims 14 and 15 distinguish over the reference of record.

CONCLUSION

For the reasons detailed above, it is submitted all claims remaining in the application (Claims 1-15) are now in condition for allowance. The foregoing comments do not require unnecessary additional search or examination.

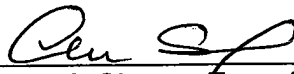
No additional fee is believed to be required for this Amendment C. However, the undersigned attorney of record hereby authorizes the charging of any necessary fees, other than the Issue Fee, to Xerox Deposit Account No. 24-0037.

In the event the Examiner considers personal contact advantageous to the disposition of this case, he/she is hereby authorized to call the undersigned, at 216/861-5582.

Respectfully submitted,

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